

THE EFFECT OF ACTIVITY-BASED TEACHING METHODS ON GRADE 7 STUDENTS' MATHEMATICAL ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION IN WATTALA DIVISION

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This study explores how activity-based education helps Grade 7 students in the Wattala Division to participate in more mathematical activities and be more enthusiastic about mathematics. In normal situations, when teachers only deliver lectures, students do not participate actively, lose interest, and hence forget what they learned. But with Activity-Based Learning (ABL), students get actively involved through problem-based activities, collaboration, and applying mathematics to real-life situations, and so learn more successfully. This study conducted a six-week comparative study design on two groups: one through traditional lecture-based teaching and the other through ABL. In this study, the sample consists of five mathematics teachers in Wattala Division and 50 students in grade 7. Data was collected by interviewing teachers, observing teachers, and surveying students. It was learned that students who were taught through ABL were more interested and engaged, and gained more knowledge compared to students who were taught by traditional teaching methods. Teachers also found that ABL led to high student involvement and helped to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Despite these self-evident benefits, this study faced challenges implementing these methods, including teacher training, inadequate resources, and adapting classrooms to interactive teaching. These challenges need to be resolved to apply ABL successfully in mathematics education. This resistance shows that there has to be a systematic transition phase when applying activity-based practices so that students can increasingly adapt in solving mathematics problems as a team and with experiential learning. This study emphasises the need for systematic teaching practices, especially student-centered and active engagement. More studies are needed to investigate the impact of ABL on student outcomes in the longer term, with different groups of students, and in different subjects. Extending this study to different learning environments will prove its effectiveness and the sustainability of it in the long term.

Keywords: Activity-based learning, Mathematics education, Motivational outcomes, Student engagement